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DECedit-620
For Tomorrow's Newsrooms

DECedit-620 DIGITAL'S NEW ELECTRONIC INPUT AND EDITORIAL SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DECedit is a vital, new reporting, editorial, and production tool that reaches to the heart of newspaper publishing–meeting deadlines and producing a quality product.

This new system provides a method of speeding up newsroom procedures and of handling vast amounts of work electronically in an efficient, orderly manner. DECedit features new, state-of-the-art hardware and systems design, including the new PDP-8/a computer and new, larger storage disks. Terminals include the brand new, VT72/t for extensive editing, and the VT61/t for news copy and classified ad input.

DECedit offers:

- Reporting and editing capabilities on a mix of up to 31 video display terminals.
- Wire service handling.
- Classified storage and regeneration.
- Remote news bureaus.
- Rapid story location with user access protection.
- Flexible story routing through the editing and production processes.
- And the advanced management status reporting facilities of modern computer technology.

THE DECedit-620 SYSTEM

A PUBLISHER'S VIEW OF THE DECedit-620 SYSTEM

DECedit is human engineered for terminal-user interaction, fast data input, and simplified text handling. The DECedit system lets your reporters cover late-breaking stories and still make your deadlines. But your staff doesn't have to adapt to DECedit. DECedit adapts to them, wherever they are located.

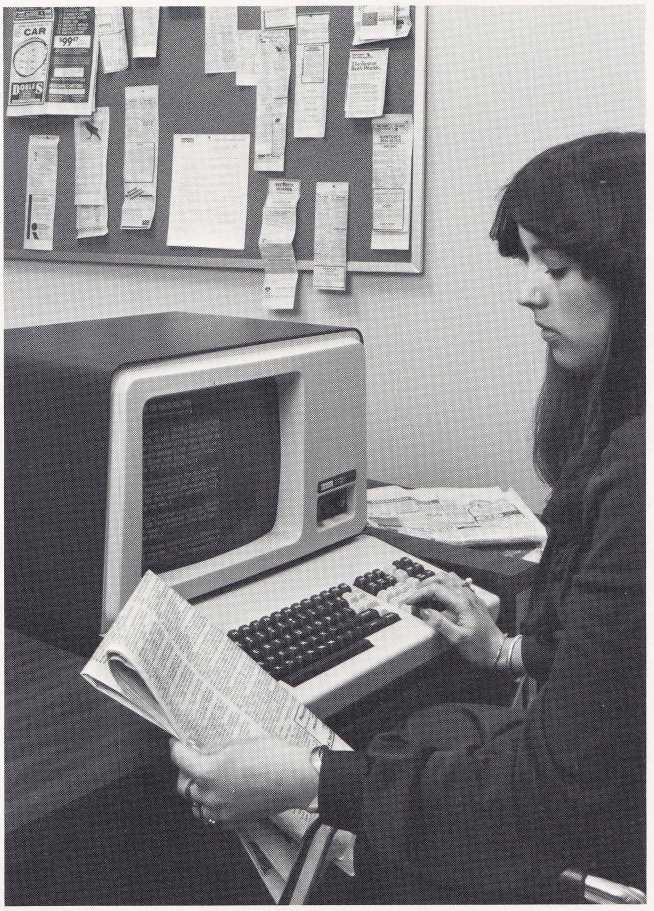
DECedit is a multi-terminal, interactive editing and input system based on DIGITAL's new, state-of-the-art PDP-8/a computer. The system is designed as either a stand-alone editing system or a total system for editing, on-line wire service collection, classified advertising, production and business needs.

DECedit features DIGITAL's new PDP-8/a computer, the new RL0l storage disk, and the new VT72/t Editorial Terminal.

The computer operates as the system traffic director, storing and retrieving information on the storage disks, co-ordinating other terminal requests and outputting stories to the photocomposers. Up to four RL01 disk drives may be added to the DECedit system, providing a total on-line storage capacity of 14 million characters. And the new VT72/t Editorial Terminal is an intelligent, high-performance terminal designed with the editor in mind.

Incoming wire service data and terminal communications are handled by the new DH8/EE Interface. It segregates incoming copy by wire service category into separate storage areas and maintains the integrity of the display terminal communication lines. Each interface unit services up to 16 terminal lines.

Stories can be input on DIGITAL's VT61/t video display input terminals, by paper tape, and on-line optical character readers (OCR's). The stories are stored and routed electronically and automatically to the proper editor. The editors use the VT72/t text editing terminal to make any necessary changes in content, style, information, priorities, etc.



Approved stories may be automatically routed to the proper destination. For example, a reporter types a story on a video display terminal, reviews it for accuracy and changes, and sends it electronically to the managing editor for review. Upon review, the managing editor directs the file, electronically, to the news editor for editing and correction. From there, the story goes to the assistant managing editor for a headline. The story is reviewed by both the managing editor and assistant managing editor, who assign it to a certain page and edition. The approved story is then electronically routed to a page file or directly to composing.

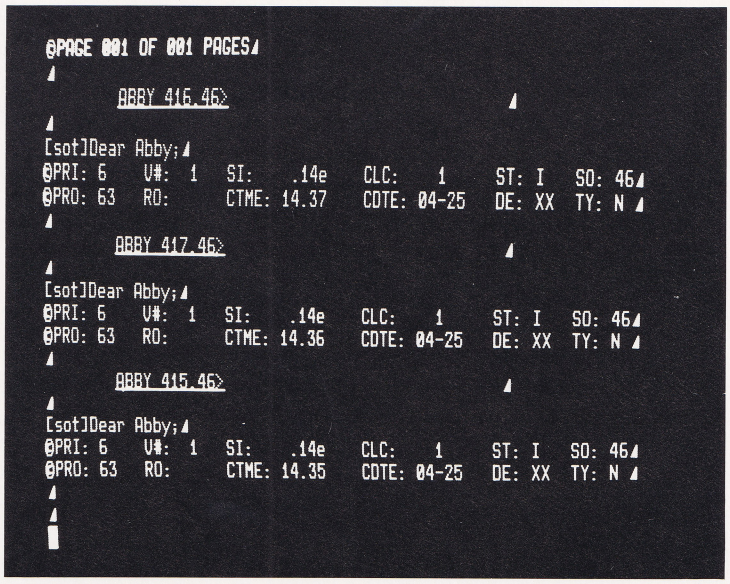
As many as 31 automatic routing paths like the one described above can be defined by the user. Individual departments or separate edition/paper staffs can customize their copy flow independently of other system users' departments' requirements.

A MANAGING EDITOR'S VIEW OF THE DECedit-620 SYSTEM

DECedit features and functions are user-defined. This means that the system can be easily adapted to today's operating procedures and modified just as easily to meet the needs of tomorrow, changing dynamically to match the growth of the newsroom.

DIRECTORY USAGE AND CONTENTS

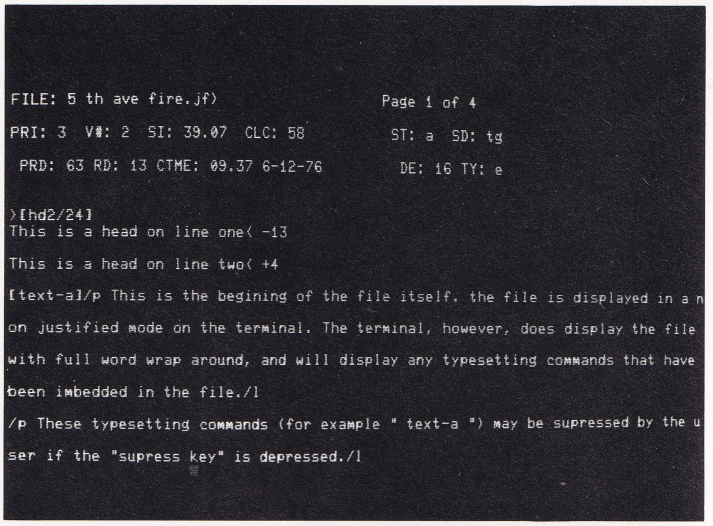
Stories input to the DECedit system may be placed in the designated editor's "in basket" or station, either automatically or manually by user request. When the file is placed in an editor's station, the managing editor can view an abstract of the file and check the size and statistical information through the directory listing for his/her station. The managing editor can also view the "in baskets" of the editors, keeping up-to-the-minute status of progress and work loads. The most recent stories or those with the highest priority always appear at the top of the directories.



INTRA-STATION STATUS

The station concept aids the managing editor in controlling news copy and maintaining intra-station status and management integrity. The station concept is similar to a filing cabinet arrangement that contains 250 user-labeled folders. Files may be placed into the folders (stations), moved to new folders, or merged with other files from the same or different folders.

The association of a file and a particular station offers several advantages: It serves as an electronic "in basket" for reporters and editors, provides useful copy flow information, and allows the managing editor to evaluate and control several related files. Stations may be designated as "in baskets," personal work areas, copy pools, advance copy files, filler material files, page queues, etc.–anything that suits the needs of the newsroom.



HEADLINE FITTING AND COPY DEPTH INFORMATION

DECedit provides the managing editor with a method of checking fit of headlines and story depth. Upon request, the system will compare the proposed headline with the requested style and will report the fit of the headline in the specified point size, typeface, and line length. The headline routines are exact, based on the actual typeface of the photocomposition machine.

Characters that exceed the specified headline fit are displayed on the terminal screen in boldface. The exact amount of headline variance–plus or minus–is displayed alongside the text. All styles that are normally used for headlines can be stored in the system. Should the user desire, stories that contain an overset headline can be withheld from the photocomposer. All headlines have a clearly visible underline on the display screen of the terminal for quick identification in the file and in the directory listing.

The editor can also obtain estimated or exact copy depth information for the text of a story at any point in production, both in lines and inches or in picas. Depth information may be automatically generated at any stage of the editing process and may be requested by an editor at any time. Depth information is displayed with the header of the file and in the directory. If the depth information is not current, the system will mark the file to notify the editor that the depth information is out of date. The sizing program automatically adjusts to various typeface and style changes within the story.

USER-DEFINED MARKUP AND STYLES

Composition commands can be user-defined or can be implemented through system defaults specified by the user. DECedit allows the user to customize the labels for all typesetting commands required to process and set text. DECedit's VT61/t input terminals have forms control features for the convenience of reporters who are entering tabular material, such as box scores and weather reports, to the system.

Style definitions and labels can be added or modified at the editor's terminal, allowing for the design and building of a markup language best suited for the particular environment. Files that do not contain style information will automatically be assigned the system default style, as determined by the station in which the story was created.

GLOBAL SEARCH

Stories may be located by "in basket" directories or by global search. This feature allows the editor to locate files through story slug lines and/or "wild card" words and characters representing story and subject descriptions. These words can be used to replace any part of a story name and to locate a specific story or group of stories having related subject matter.

DATA BASE MANAGEMENT AND COPY AUDIT TRAIL

The DECedit system provides the managing editor with both automatic and manual data base management and copy audit trails. Creation time and date information provided in the directory tells the managing editor how long a story has been in the data base. Directory commands allow the managing editor to obtain a directory of all stories that are more than or less than a specified number of hours or days old. Thus, the newest or oldest stories can be quickly located without looking through the entire directory.

A "flag for kill" code can be inserted into a file, either manually or automatically, at any time. This special code appears in the directory. An update routine produces an audit trail for each file that is killed. The copy audit trail tracks the path of each story that is deleted by the update routine.

Together, these vital tracking tools help the managing editor follow every story in the system to ensure that none are lost or overlooked and that out-of-date stories are removed from the data base as quickly as possible to maintain a consistently current data base.

SYSTEM SECURITY

DECedit provides system security with respect to file access and review; classified access; station access; composing functions; and all system routing, typeset, and kill commands. Each reporter, ad taker, editor, and manager is assigned a password. The password is restrictive in that certain users can only perform basic functions assigned by management, and important storage areas can only be accessed by key personnel. Passwords can be defined by the user and modified or changed as necessary.

BACK-UP

In a multi-system environment, all peripheral devices can be switched: display terminals, photocomposition interfaces, and line printers. In the unlikely event of service interruption, devices can be switched from one system to another quickly and easily.

THE ROLE OF THE VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINALS

THE VT72/t AND THE MANAGING EDITOR

A wide variety of editorial and administrative tasks must be handled by the managing editor. All of them can be done from the VT72/t:

- Assign priority to files so "hot stories" will be handled first.
- Set aside certain stories for later consideration; edit and send others to production. Route stories back to the reporters with notes and rewrite instructions, and route still others to staff editors.
- Rename certain files and delete those that are obsolete.
- Combine files through simple directory commands.
- Determine the status of particular stories in one user area or a group of user areas. Determine what items requested in the last hour have not been done.
- Duplicate files to create follow-up stories quickly.
- Review directories before routing files to other work stations or making other decisions. A story abstract is included for identification purposes.

The VT72/t, with its own built-in microprocessor, is a fast-reacting, upper-and-lower-case, intelligent video terminal that performs complex editing tasks.

A compact and quiet terminal, the VT72/t is capable of moving vast amounts of copy through the editorial, classified, and production departments of a newspaper. Because of the automatic copy flow and routing capabilities of the DECedit system, a great deal of footwork and manual intervention are saved.

While the managing editor is performing administrative tasks, reporters, news editors, sports editors, editorial writers, production people, and advertising personnel can all work in their own system areas at their own speeds.

The VT72/t keyboard consists of a function keypad and a standard typewriter keyset with some additional special-purpose keys–including 16 user-definable keys that may each have two unique definitions. With a single keystroke, a user-defined key performs such operations as:

- Assign different text formats designed by the user.
- Recall standard, pretyped paragraphs, avoiding duplication of effort.
- Execute commonly used story and routing commands.

Panned scrolling provides variable-speed, vertical movement of the screen image in the same smooth manner one would encounter on home television. Panned scrolling allows easy scanning of moving copy and continuous viewing of an entire story.

Command keys, special function keys and a clearly visible cursor enable the user to create, edit, store, and prepare copy for output to a photo-composition machine. As with panned scrolling, the user can vary the movement speed of the cursor.

With the horizontal split screen capability, two stories can be viewed simultaneously. Either the upper or lower half of the screen can be designated as the active area (i.e., that portion of the screen in which you can edit). Activity is shifted from one area to the other by a single keystroke. Another typical use of split screen might be to type notes taken over a telephone on one screen half, and while viewing those notes type the story on the other screen half. All of the VT72/t editing features may be used with split screen.

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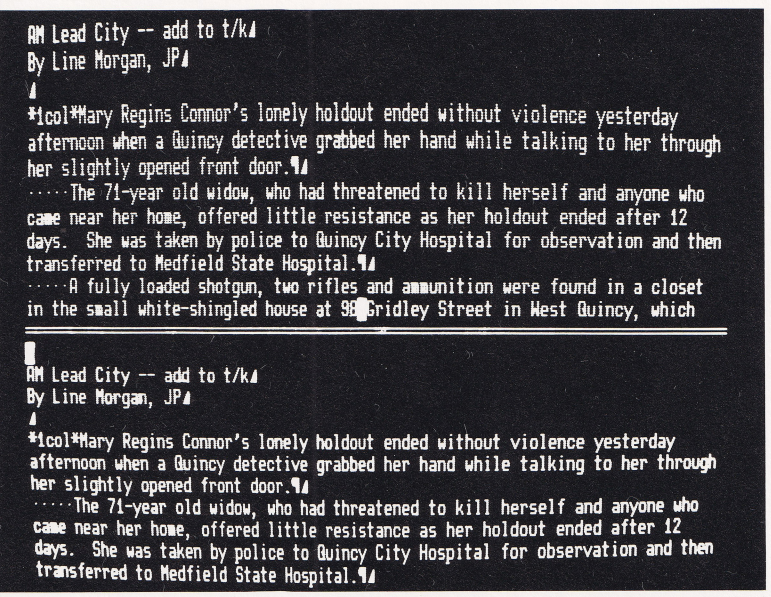
THE VT72/t AND THE NEWS EDITOR

Stories need to be abstracted, rearranged, combined, corrected, and rewritten. All of these editing tasks and many others can be conveniently performed by the news editor at VT72/t. Here is a partial list:

- Insert, delete, or move words, lines, sentences, paragraphs, or blocks of text. Overstrike characters or words.
- Search for and change a particular character, word, or group of words that re-occur within a story either automatically or manually.
- Move or repeat lines, paragraphs, or blocks of text anywhere within a story.
- Embed messages, instructions, or notes within a story for future action or review.
- Blocks of copy can be saved in the terminal so that, for instance, the best of a UPI and the best of an AP story can be restored into a third story.
- Using split screen, view a story being rewritten on one half of the screen while performing the rewrite on the other half.
- The large memory capacity of the VT72/t (35,000 characters maximum) allows for review and editing of lengthy stories.
- Users can define any number of contiguous characters or words, from one character to an entire story, for the purpose of working on a particular segment of text.
- Five text modes (normal, boldface, underline, blank, and reverse video) and any combination of these are available.
- The speed of the cursor can be controlled to allow for editing and review at a pace that is comfortable for the user.



- When the UNDEL key is pressed, the most recently deleted character, word, or any size text block is restored to the screen.
- Transposed characters can be corrected with a single keystroke.
- One key is depressed to change capital letters to lower case and vice versa. This key is also used to capitalize for emphasis or correct capitalization mistakes.
- Pressing a single key enables the user to "step through" a story one page at a time.

ROUTING

Using automatic routing capabilities, the news editor can send stories electronically from the terminal to appropriate work stations in whatever sequence is necessary to get stories into final page form. For example, story files might be automatically moved to the managing editor and then back to the news editor. Stories can then be released to the layout editor for eventual assignment to a page station and/or photocomposition machine. The news editor can also specify that all files ready for layout be sent to the line printer. Stories can, if desired, be automatically allotted among different editors. The source and final destination of stories are recorded automatically. This information is displayed with the file header and in the directory.

MARKUP AND TYPE STYLES

With DECedit the news editor has access to all type styles (point size, typeface, and line length) for designing a markup language best suited to the editorial department. Also accessible are copy depth and headline depth information for any story.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The news editor has access to story files in the directory. Each file has a name or user-defined slug line, as well as identification of the authorized user area. In addition to an abstract of stories, which includes the story headline if it has been written, the directory contains management information, such as story file depth and estimated line count, priority and routing information, type of copy, origin of story file, creation date and time, and file status. Story names/slug lines and headlines are underlined. Therefore, they are quickly and clearly distinguishable from the normal abstract and the bold statistical listings in the directory. Stories can be brought to the video terminal screen just by placing the cursor on the file name and pressing a key.

When the directory is not in use, stories can also be brought to the screen by simply pressing a key. The system retrieves and displays the top story in the editor's "work basket."

THE VT72/t AND THE WIRE EDITOR

DECedit handles on-line wire service input from standard ANPA/RI transmission formats–both text and tabular material–from up to 4 low-speed or one high- and 3 low-speed newswires. Additional capacity for as many as 16 lines may be obtained with the addition of the DECwire controller.

WIRE DIRECTORIES

Directory information is available on request by the DECedit user and may be routed to either a video display terminal or line printer. File and directory information are maintained by story category, which is sorted by time of transmission with the latest stories on top.

Directories may be requested by wire for either the most recent files or all files within a specific number of hours. The information includes the wire service type, transmitted story number, category, priority, transmission time and date, user access time and date, line count, the DECedit station that last accessed the file and approximately the first 6 lines of text.

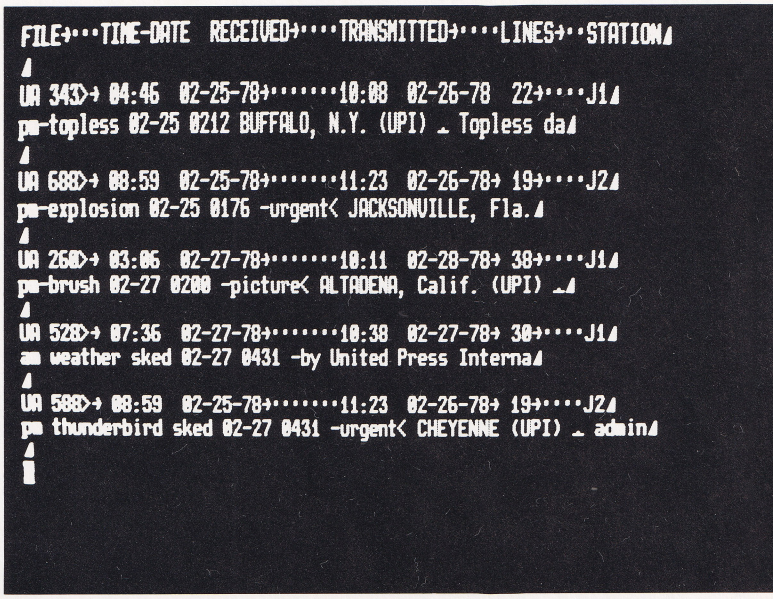
DECedit handles both straight and single- or double-column tabular material. Once a wire story is retrieved into the main data base, it is handled like any other story. It can be edited, restored, combined with other files, renamed, duplicated, routed or sent to an output device, with or without a user specified priority.

MERGING STORY FILES

DECedit allows a designated group of stories to be merged quickly and easily with a new name assigned to the new multi-story file. Up to nine stories may be merged into a new file with a new story name, if desired. Stories may be merged either by specific command or from a directory.

REMOTE BUREAUS

Any number of VT61/t and VT72/t terminals may be located in remote news gathering locations and interfaced directly to DECedit via an EIA (RS232) circuit. All system functions are available to the remote bureau including system security. The transmission rate is user selectable based on the selected communication hardware.



THE VT72/t AND THE PRODUCTION MANAGER

Typically, after the stories and ads are approved, they are routed to composing. The VT72/t users in production may have the same capabilities available to them as editorial people. (In some newspaper environments a VT61/t is suitable.) In a total system environment, VT72/t's may also be directly connected to a DECset system. The markup person can specify typeface, type size, column width, and vertical spacing. Files are sent to J and H, and the results may be examined on the terminal. Proofs can be generated when commands to typeset are issued at the terminal.

The last steps for most files are layout, typesetting, and page paste-up. Directories can be examined by the production manager in advance to see what is coming. This allows for efficient planning and more equal distribution of work loads. The system lends itself to the accumulation of files and file statistics (depth, time, etc.) that are of vital assistance to the layout editor, as well as the production manager.

The system facilitates "page bursting" for simultaneous release of large numbers of associated files on a page to the phototypesetter. Files may be stored in page stations in the DECedit system or released to the DECset system for eventual release "en masse" to the phototypesetters. Both the DECedit and DECset systems give the users depth information, as well as status information about individual files.

THE VT61/t AND THE REPORTER

In a totally integrated system, the reporter types stories and notes on the VT61/t video display input terminal and then routes the stories to the appropriate editorial stations. The reporter can insert text with ease, make corrections, and back-track with the help of a flashing cursor that indicates typing position in the text. The reporter can change typing location up, down, left or right; to the beginning of viewed text; or to the end of viewed text. Blocks of text can be moved around by the DECedit system. Characters, words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs can be deleted or inserted. A full word wraparound feature eliminates the need to manually end each line with a carriage return. All legal system commands can be issued from the VT61/t.

VT61/t FEATURES

These are some of the VT61/t features that minimize the reporters writing task:

- Designed for quick familiarization and ease of use.
- Notes, queries, and messages can be embedded in stories.
- Input and editing flexibility–19 special keys designed and labeled for newsroom operation.
- Complete forms mode with protected fields for entering box scores, weather reports, etc. on user-designed terminal masks.
- Flashing cursor for easy location of typing position within text.
- Full word wraparound.

SECURITY

Through a multi-level security system, reporters' stories and notes are protected from deletion or modification and unauthorized use.

THE VT61/t AND THE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING MANAGER

Contract and transient ads, both display and liners may be keyboarded directly into the system at the VT61/t as it is being dictated by the customer. With the customer on the telephone and the ad form on the screen, a simple command causes DECedit to calculate the ad size so that the ad price can be determined almost instantly.

The VT61/t features user-defined, protected-field forms mode displays, which are easy to understand and use. Filling in the blanks of a classified advertisement form on the display is easy. The cursor positions itself at the space to be filled in, and the ad taker simply types in the appropriate information.

Each ad may be assigned an ad taker number, classified number, and customer account or invoice number, and other pertinent accounting and scheduling information. This information appears on reports and is necessary for DIGITAL's automatic classified billing program (optional). Stored ads can be retrieved and edited at the terminal. Commands to insert, retrieve, manually kill, and list ad reports may also be issued by the operator. Other commands produce line-printer copy, ad directories, or galleys on the photocomposition machine.

Like stories, ads can follow any route through the system in order to meet the needs of the classified Advertising Department. Credit checks may be performed using the customer's telephone number, and credit risk ads may be automatically routed directly to the credit manager.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SYSTEM FEATURES

DECedit Classified Ad Storage is a large-capacity classified ad storage and regeneration system capable of handling up to 24 pages of solid-set classified ads per storage disk.

Classified ad takers normally input ads by "filling-in-the-blanks" of the VT61/t, user-designed ad form. However, ads may also be input via on-line OCR and paper tape reader. An ad may contain the demographic information required by your classified billing program and the header information that controls run days, skip days, editions, etc.

The DECedit classified system provides automatic filename and invoice number generation; and an interactive ad sizing program for fixed-rate billing estimation. Optionally offered is telephone number credit checking and classified ad invoicing and billing packages for transient ad billing on either ad insertion or expiration.

The system handles all the details of transient and contract advertisements. Reports such as edition size, dumps, manual and automatic kills, reactivated ads and skip key modification are generated daily, helping the ad takers and production personnel do their jobs more efficiently and accurately.

Some of the system features that benefit the ad takers, the various managers, production personnel, and indirectly your customers, are summarized below:

- VDT, OCR, or paper tape inputs–interactive or batch mode.
- Automatic routing to supervisors, credit managers, and the classified ad sort program.
- Ad retrieval by classification and customer phone number for correction.
- Customer phone number credit check (optional).
- Classified ad billing for invoices, aging reports and ad renewal reports.
- Interactive sizing program.
- Key word sorting capability.
- Protected, fixed-field forms with flexible field manipulation.

GRAPHIC ARTS GROUP

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